Disabled-friendly trains

4450. DR. AKHILESH DAS :
SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that while 75 per cent concession in railway fares is given to thalesemia patients and 50 per cent to cancer, heart and kidney patients seeking treatment in well known centers; no concessions or facilities like disabled friendly trains and platforms as per Disability Act of 1995 have been granted to the disabled; and

(b) if so, the reasons for ignoring the disabled by the railways ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA) : (a) and (b) Railways grant 50% concession in AC 2-tier and AC first Class and 75% concession in Second, Sleeper, First, AC Chair Car and AC 3-tier Mail/Express fares to thalessemia, cancer, heart and kidney patients. Certain categories of disabled persons *i.e.* orthopaedically handicapped, deaf and dumb, blind and mentally retarded persons are also granted concession in fares subject to certain terms and conditions.

Regarding facilities to disabled persons, a new design of coach has been developed which has disabled-friendly features like wider entrances and aisles to allow wheel chair movement, modified toilets and other facilities. Such coaches have already been put into service. At stations, Railways have decided to provide facilities like standard ramp for barrier free entry, non-slippery walkway, signages, toilets, water taps suitable for needs of handicapped persons, ramps on Foot Over Bridge (FOB)/subway, etc. These facilities are being introduced at various stations in a phased manner depending upon the availability of resources and relative priorities.

Stepping up security

4451. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Centre has asked States to step up security in all violence-prone areas to ensure safety to rail passengers;

(b) what steps are being taken to modernise signalling equipment, overhaul old railway tracks and training to concerned personnel to eliminate risk of human failure; and

(c) what are other details in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Provision of following signalling systems are in progress to modernise signalling on Indian Railways :

- Replacement of overaged signalling assests with modern signalling system like electronic/panel/Route Relay Interlocking systems.
- Provision of continuous track circuiting with automatic block signalling and auxiliary warning system.
- Provision of Anti-Collision Device.
- Provision of Block Proving by Axle counter.
- Provision of Train Actuated Warning Devices.
- Provision of other modern signalling equipments like Data Loggers, Audio Frequency Track Circuit, LED signals, Digital Axle Counter, Integrated Power Supply System.

Repair, maintenance and modernisation of Railway track is an on-going process. These works are carried out regularly depending upon the need and availability of funds. For ensuring safety of traffic, track is inspected regularly and corrective action taken promptly wherever required. Speed restrictions are also imposed for ensuring safety, if the suitation so warrants. Track renewals are also undertaken depending upon the renewal and availability of funds.

The following steps are being taken to modernise the track :

I. Regular inspection of track at various levels is undertaken.

II. For monitoring track geometry and running characteristics of track, sophisticated track recording cars and oscillograph cars are being used.

III. Training to railway staff is provided immediately after their recruitment and thereafter their knowledge is refreshed periodically. Seminars/Workshops Field demonstrations are also organised for Permanent Way staff from time to time to enhance/update their knowledge.

IV. The wooden/cast iron/steel sleepers are also being replaced with concrete Sleepers.

V Single rail and short welded three rail panels are being converted into long welded rails. This process removes fish plated joints from the track for greater reliability.

VI The specifications of rail steel have been upgraded and are in conformity with the International Union of Railways (UIC) specifications.

VII Ultrasonic Flaw Detectors are used to detect hidden flaws in the rail.

VIII Mechanised maintenance of track is being introduced progressively, for better and improved maintenance.

IX The track structure is being upgraded on a planned basis.

X To keep the track in good condition, track renewals are carried out whenever it becomes due for renewal subject to availability of funds.

Rail link rakes for Karnataka

4452. DR. VIJAY MALLYA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways was approached by Government of Karnataka to provide sufficient railway rakes for movement (export) of 2 lakhs tonnes of Maize to Bangladesh from Ranibennur and Haveri of Karnataka; and

(b) by when the Railway rakes will be provided to that State ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Movement to Bangladesh is regulated due to limited acceptance of trains by Bangladesh Railways. Government of Karnataka has also been apprised of the same. As on date, there is only one demand in Karnataka for loading Maize to Bangladesh which will be cleared in its turn.

Stoppage of Rajdhani Express at Raichur

4453. DR. VIJAY MALLYA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a move to cancel the present stop over of Rajdhani Express at Raichur;

(b) whether Railways are aware that such a proposal, if any, would cause a lot of inconvenience to the commuters of Raichur; and